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LETTER DATED 21 SEPTEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on East and West Timor issued on 21 September 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Marjatta RASI
Permanent Representative of Finland
to the United Nations

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on East and West Timor issued on 21 September 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the progress in the deployment of the international force in East Timor. It shows the willingness of the international community to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the question of East Timor based on the self-determination of the people of East Timor. Fear is giving way for hope in East Timor.

We commend and continue to support the work of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Mission in East Timor in pursuing the consultation process towards the independence of East Timor.

The European Union praises the contribution of those Members States of the United Nations that have provided troops and material support to the international force. The participation of regional States is especially important for the success of the operation. We wish to pay tribute to those Asian and, in particular, Association of Southeast Asian Nations States that have contributed to the establishment of the international force. It clearly shows their interest in the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

In this context, we commend the cooperation of the Indonesian Government with the international force. Complete and early withdrawal of the Indonesian armed forces from East Timor as well as rapid containment and disarmament of any paramilitary elements in the territory is crucial for the operation to achieve its immediate objectives, namely, to protect the civilian population and allow an immediate and full-scale beginning of humanitarian assistance.

The European Union remains gravely concerned over the humanitarian situation in East Timor and, particularly, in West Timor. The European Union repeats its earlier appeals for allowing immediate safe access for international humanitarian organizations to both East and West Timor. Refugees in West Timor must be free to decide themselves whether they want to return to East Timor. Indonesian authorities remain responsible for their safety and humanitarian needs. The international community stands ready to help the Indonesian authorities.

The European Union supports calls for the establishing of an international commission of inquiry to investigate cases in which international humanitarian law has allegedly been violated. Impunity for atrocities cannot be tolerated.